

CAMPAIGN DRUG FREE

by Lt. j.g. Tay Brymer

The battle against drugs is one the Navy continues to fight on the home front and the Navy Reserve is taking center stage in fighting this battle and winning the war on drugs with Campaign Drug Free (CDF).

In November 1992, CDF was launched as one of the Navy's five flagship programs with the Navy Reserve Force as the flagship sponsor to aide in fighting the war on drugs. The program's focus is on helping communities and schools educate youth on the dangers of drugs and substance abuse and the importance of being drug-free.

"CDF is a voluntary program where Sailors visit schools, churches and other community organizations and use professionally produced videotapes to convey a powerful anti-drug message to elementary, middle, and high school students," said Capt. Dennis E. Ahern, Campaign Drug Free national coordinator. "Following the main presentation, volunteers engage students in discussions challenging them to take charge of their lives and stay drug free. All volunteers for the program are screened and we accept only those who exemplify Navy core values."

According to the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA), "In 2001, an estimated 15.9 million Americans aged 12 or older were current illicit drug users and nearly one in five teens have used inhalants to get high. Inhaling household products can cause brain damage and sudden death, even the first time."

THE CDF PROGRAM ENCOURAGES YOUTHS TO STAY OFF DRUGS BY PROVIDING ROLE MODELS TO EDUCATE ON THE DANGERS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

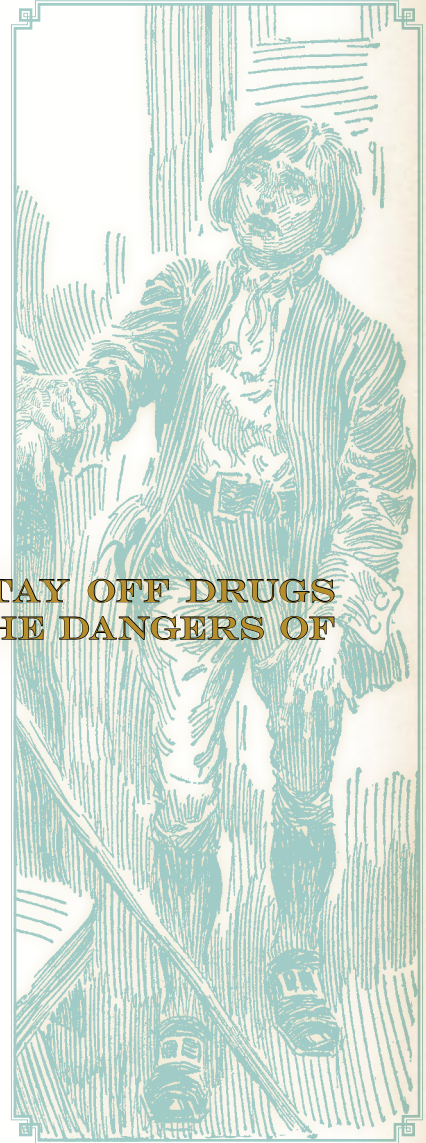
With the Navy's zero tolerance policy, Sailors volunteering with CDF are excellent role models for today's youth and tomorrow's future," said Storekeeper 1st Class Nivea Estrada, New Orleans representative for CDF.

When the program began, Sailors reached out to nearly 8,000 youths. Today the program reaches over 24,000 per year and still growing expediently, said Ahern.

For fiscal year 2004, the Secretary of Defense recognized CDF for their efforts in drug demand reduction during the annual "Red Ribbon Week" at the Pentagon by presenting them with the Secretary of Defense Community Drug Awareness Award.

CDF received the award for efforts to educate more than 18,000 children during FY04 to the dangers drugs pose. They also set up a toll-free phone number so units can get the latest information and set up anti-drug presentations.

To join the fight in CDF's battle on drugs, call 1-800-554-4542 or log onto their Web site at campaign drug free. Together we can make a difference.



U.S. Navy Photos by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Kurt Eischen